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SIPDIS
TELEGRAM

March 19, 2003

To: No Action Addressee
Action: Unknown
From: AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI (ABU DHABI 1345 - ROUTINE)
TAGS: ECON, ETRD
Captions: None
Subject: UAE FEDERAL CUSTOMS AUTHORITY STILL A WORK IN PROGRESS
Ref: None

UNCLAS ABU DHABI 01345

SIPDIS
CXABU:
ACTION: ECON
INFO: DCM POL P/M AMB
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INFO: FCS

DISSEMINATION: ECON
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: AMB: MMWAHBA
DRAFTED: ECON: GARANA
CLEARED: ECON: TEWILLIAMS

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ZNR UUUUU ZZH
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FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 8957
RUCPDO/USDOC WASHDC
RUEHZM/GCC COLLECTIVE
RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS 0490

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SENSITIVE

STATE FOR NEA/ARP, NEA/RA
AMEMBASSY TUNIS HOLD FOR FSI: OLIVER JOHN
USDOC FOR 4530/ITA/MAC/ONE/DGUGLIELMI,
4520/ITA/MAC/ONE/CLOUSTAUNAU,
4500/ITA/MAC/DAS/WILLIAMSON,
3131/CS/OIO/ANESA

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [TC](#)
SUBJECT: UAE FEDERAL CUSTOMS AUTHORITY STILL A WORK IN PROGRESS

1. (SBU) The Ambassador discussed the status of the UAE's Federal Customs Authority (FCA) with Finance Minstate Dr. Muhammad Khalfan bin Khirbash (the de facto Finance Minister) on March 18. Dr. Khirbash stated that while the legislation creating the Federal Customs Authority has been passed -- and the authority

has even held its first meeting under the leadership of the nominal chair, Hamdan bin Rashad Al-Maktoum (the nominal Finance Minister) -- no federal customs law has been enacted which would lay out with precision the powers of the FCA. It had been agreed by the individual emirates that the FCA would be responsible for overseeing the collection of fees resulting from the GCC Customs Union, and for maintaining a UAE-wide list of products to be exempted from these duties. But until legislation is passed (most likely by June of this year), the FCA's powers are very limited. Dr. Khirbash said it would take several months after the passage of this implementing legislation for the FCA to become fully effective.

12. (SBU) Comment: The UAE is strongly committed to the GCC customs union but, because of its unique confederal nature, faces distinctive challenges in developing an effective federal structure to oversee what is primarily, according to the UAE constitution, an Emirate-level responsibility.

Wahba